THE CHURCH MONTHLY

Volume 6 OCTOBER, 1932 *Number 12*

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Boys of the Church School in the Work Shop

THE CHURCH MONTHLY

Volume 6 OCTOBER, 1932 *Number 12*

The Innermost Problem of Human Nature—Desire

By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

IT should not be difficult to see that the inner problem of human nature is desire. Hardly a more searching question can be asked of any man than this: What do you want?

That desire is thus the inner driving power of human nature is, for example, chronologically evident in that it is the earliest force to awaken. Stocks and stones can hardly be said to have wants, but when life emerges desire importunately begins. These springtime trees and shrubs want something, and on this May morning all their multitudinous cells are waking to seek it. When life rises into animal forms and becomes conscious, this truth is emphasized —the primary force in animal life, antedating intelligence, antedating conscious planning, is desire. When, then, we human beings appear, we simply give further illustration to this truth. If we say that we will run our lives upon intelligence, we soon discover that our mental faculties are instruments by which we labor to fulfill desire. If we say we will guide our lives by foresight, we soon discover that our conscious plans and purposes are means by which we work to achieve what we desire.

Look out across the world today and behind the external aspects of its conflict perceive with clairvoyant eyes how deep within the heart of man desires are the moving forces which inspire everything man does, and then look deep within the soul and see that the steam in our own engine and the driver in our cab is desire. If our brains are busy with some plan, be sure that some desire has said, Go, bring me this! and if our hands are active on some enterprise, be sure desire has cried, Go, get me that!

Now, commonly, when Christian preachers have dealt with this matter they have talked to us about what we ought to desire! The difference, they would say, between a gunman on one side and some Jane Addams or Sir Wilfred Grenfell on the other is a difference of what they want from life. Seeing, then, that our desires thus give the driving force and direction to our existence, let us lift up our hearts and set them on the things we ought to want.

To be sure, but anybody who has tried to blow upon his hands and change his desires knows that something deeper than that needs to be said; therefore this morning I venture to talk with you, not so much about what we ought to desire, as about what we do desire. The psychologists have worked that out for us. They have digged down into the deepest, most universal, most controlling wants of human nature, and the primary question about these ineradicable desires is not, Ought we to have them? but, Since we, being human beings, do have them and cannot help it, what shall we do with them? Let us, then, consider these basic desires that belong to us because we are human, and let us do it in the spirit of that ancient psalmist who long ago lifted up his heart before the living God and said, "Lord, all my desire is before thee." That goes close to the center of vital religion,

my friends—to take the profoundest wants of human life and lift them up to God, saying, "All my desire is before thee."

Consider in the first place the need of security. That is basic. Those of you who are observant parents or are following the psychological experiments with young children know that no discomfort can fall upon a little one quite so distressing as the sense of physical insecurity. One young baby's dangerous nervousness was completely cured by following the wise counsel of a physician, simply that the child be tightly wrapped in a blanket so that he would feel himself held together and protected. The first and deepest desire of human beings is for physical security.

Nor do we ever outgrow it, as witness what happens in an earthquake or a storm at sea or an accident bringing into play the instinct of self-preservation. Unless the foreground of our activity can have behind it a background of security we human beings are undone. Of course, just now this fact is cruelly evident in our want of economic security. When we have it, how simple it seems, but how dreadful the consequence when it is gone! Then we wake up to discover that there is nothing we crave so much as simple security.

A desire that runs through all our physical and economic experience is bound to be basic in our spiritual life, so that when men talk about the collapse of Christianity and the triumph of atheism and all that, the first answer, at the least, is that they do not understand psychology. Mankind cannot and will not live without some deep satisfaction for this inward need for spiritual security. "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock."

My friends, church polities may fail, creeds may wane and pass away, ideas of God change with altering knowledge, and forms of religion prove themselves ephemeral, but still deep within the heart of man is a need to which such words as these from the Master correspond, a need for inner spiritual security so strong that human life is not really human unless it is satisfied. One does not understand religion, its profound origin, its independence of its temporary forms, its ability to recover from its illnesses and rise from its seeming deaths, unless one understands that vital religion is thus grounded and rooted in the deepest wants of human nature and among them the need of spiritual stability. "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord"!

To be sure, someone may protest at this point, saying, This is the trouble with religion, that it gives men a sense of security; men go to sleep on it; it makes them complacent and lazy; they lie down on their faith in God instead of recognizing that unless they are up and doing to save themselves and the world no one will do it for them—that is the curse of religion; it makes men lazy so that it becomes as Karl Marx said, the opiate of the people.

To which I say, All our desires can thus be misused and take perverted forms. It is true in religion that the search for security through faith can be a narcotic and issue in lazy saints who trust in God and are good for nothing. But I ask you to take a long look at the Christ in Galilee who spoke of having foundations so that when the rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon the house it would not fall. Was Jesus' religion an opiate? Did he in consequence live a lazy life? Was he soft and unadventurous? Did he lie down upon his faith? And I ask whether you think that in the long run we are going to get his radiant character, his unconquerable courage, his tireless faith in a world worth dying for, his capacity for sustained endurance and self-sacrifice, out of people who have within them no strong foundations of spiritual steadfastness?

For myself, I have lived long enough and have seen so much of the appalling

tragedies that fall on human life that a man who belittles the inner security that comes from a strong religious faith seems to me cheap and trivial. Spiritual stability is like foundations to a house. It is like roots to a tree. It is like a base of supplies for an army. It is like an unfailing fountain for a stream. I will even accept that scornful comparison with sleep. Religion puts people to sleep, some say. Well, did you ever have insomnia, when you could not sleep? Did you ever try to live when restless activity vexed your days and ravaged your nights so that you could not sleep? Do we not know that a man who cannot sleep cannot work? So a great religious faith does put at the central core of a man's soul steadiness, restfulness, confidence, peace, and out of it comes the best work that ever has been done. This deep desire for security is native to us and ineradicable from us. Since we have it, to be used one way or another, shall we not lift it up to its highest meanings and say, "Lord, all my desire is before thee"?

In the second place, the psychologists tell us that we all have a need of personal recognition. Each one of us desires to be important to some one. We all must see ourselves in that mirror. We do need friends. We do need to be loved. We do need to be recognized and approved by some one, and of all hells into which man might fall, none would be more intolerable than to live in a lonely world unrecognized, where no one cared.

On Mothers' Day, when we naturally think of homes and children, how plainly this shines out! Long ago in our childhood the times came—my soul, remember them, for they are the turning points in a boy's life—we did something, displayed some ability, showed some worth-while interest, and lo! our home folk rose upon it like the sun, fell upon it like the rain, and in their stimulating and creative approval powers were released in us we had not dreamed were there. So we always grow under the stimulus and the approval of our friends.

That is the tragedy of the city streets—boys and girls made of as good human material as we were, growing up where social approval falls on exploits that are lawless and destructive. Alas, these tragic stories of boys whose fine courage and adventurousness ran out, as ours did, into channels dug by social approval, only in their case the social approval of gangsters and racketeers; or of young girls going the limit of vicious living and then explaining that they simply wanted to prove to their crowd that they were good Indians. That is what we all wanted—what every boy and girl wants—to show to his crowd that he is a good Indian; only in our home being a good Indian was described by our family and friends in terms that made life beautiful.

We do not mostly live for money. Only a few misers do that. We do not live mainly for fame. A man must be a sheer idiot not to see the folly of that. But we do live for the approval of the people whom we love. That desire goes deep and lasts long. Indeed, as a man grows older, that is almost all he does care about.

Once more, then, following the trail blazed by one of these basic human desires, we run straight into vital Christianity. Let us take it from the lips of a man who never would have called himself a Christian, John Stuart Mill, the philosopher. Writes Mill, "nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life."

Did someone come in here this morning thinking that Christianity is petering out? This kind of Christianity will not peter out. To become acquainted with Jesus Christ, to hear him say, "No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends," to have our imagination fascinated by the loveliest character we ever knew so that in our finest hours we do inwardly try to live so that he might say, Well done!—that kind of Christianity will not peter out.

Recall how Chinese Gordon put it. To the end of his life Gordon had special temptations to fight. In his letters to his sister he used to call them Agag, from the Amalekite king who harassed Israel, and his praying often consisted in dragging Agag up before the Lord and dealing with him there. In one letter he writes, "My constant prayer is against Agag, who, of course, is here, and as insinuating as ever." Report has it that more than once he said to his friends, "I had a hard half hour this morning hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord."

Someone here from outside the Christian circle may have been accustomed to say that we Christians do not live as we ought. You are right, but if you knew the Agags we have inside of us, if you knew how much worse we could be than we are, if you knew how sometimes when the temptation is terrific the haunting presence of Christ does overshadow us and we try to make decisions that he would approve, you would be thankful. Friendship lifted up to the highest so that we live for the approval of the best character we have ever seen—that is vital Christianity.

> "O Lord and Master of us all,
> Whate'er our name or sign,
> We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
> We test our lives by thine."

In a generation when so many millions of people are living for low approval, God grant that that kind of Christianity may not peter out!

In the third place, psychologists tell us that we all have a desire for new experiences. There is a pioneering instinct in us all. We want security and friendship, but these are not enough. We want adventure. A world in which there was nothing new to see, nothing new to know, nothing new to do would be a world in which human life would not be human. From a little child thrilled by his first experiment in walking, and chuckling out his glee as he toddles across the floor, to Admiral Byrd seeking the South Pole or some physicist trying to blast an atom to pieces, human beings desire adventure.

Some of the world's worst evils come from that. One suspects that half the allurement and support of war rise from that desire. Call war wicked, insane, and ruinous to men and nations; it still is thrilling, and millions of men today, who know all the evil that war brings upon the world, still can say that they never expect to live through anything half as exciting again. It is an adventure, so that, as William James says, we do need a moral equivalent of war.

Or in the commercial world, consider a character like Ivar Kreuger. One suspects that he practised his perfidy and, after being one of the best trusted men on earth, became a forger and a crook, not primarily for love of money but for the sake of commercial adventure, pushing out his enterprises by hook or crook, by fair means or foul, as far as he could further them. Alas, when this adventurous desire for new experience goes wrong, what havoc it can work!

Recall those three crosses on Calvary and remember that the three men who hung there were all adventurers. Two of them were criminals, no peasants now who had accepted their fathers' farms, content to live within conventional boundaries, but adventurously taking a perilous short cut to what they wanted, like pirates running their Jolly Roger to the masthead and sailing in. And Christ was an adventurer—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"; "It hath been said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you." Three adventurers on three crosses, two below the level, one above it. So in every generation this adventurous desire for new experiences carries men *down* or *up*. It takes this boy into drink, wild license, political buccaneering, commercial dishonesty; it takes that boy into excellence of character, scientific discovery, artistic adventurousness, public service, creative business. It

(*Continued on page* 502)

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

ETERNAL Father from Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, bring this family beneath the shadow of Thy great protection. From the strife of tongues and the turbulence of man's passion build us this day in Thy sanctuary a pavilion of peace.

We ask no monastic seclusion, no cloistered quiet, no selfish retreat from the problems and troubles of mankind. We pray Thee only for a high hill from which for a little time we may see life in true perspective and wide horizon before again we go down into the valley. We ask Thee for a clear, quiet spring where we may refresh ourselves before once more we take up our pilgrimage. We come to Thee for cleansing and for power.

Cleanse us, we beseech Thee, from our old failures. May they no longer haunt us. Life's troubles are too heavy day by day if we are not delivered from the haunting memory of old mistakes. Give us the grace of sincere penitence and restitution that we may be right with Thee, with our neighbor, with our own souls, and return free from the burden of the past.

Cleanse us from old irritations. Let us not carry into another week the exasperations of days gone by. Teach us that those who hate harm their own souls more than the victims of their ire. Baptize us with charity, kindliness, magnanimity, and let old hostilities die.

Cleanse us from our anxieties. Thou seest in what sore estate some of us endeavor to lift up our hearts with thanksgiving unto Thee. Thou seest how unreal upon the lips of some of us are the loud anthems of our praise. We beseech Thee to gird us with Thine everlasting arms, to give us the consciousness of deep rootage in Thy power so that we may go forth, not so much with less trouble as with more strength. Change, O God, the proportion of our power to our task. We pray Thee not for easy lives but for resource sufficient to overcome anxiety.

We lift up before Thee this world of need. Save us from pagan imaginations which think of calamity only in large terms. Give us Christian imaginations that we may see men and women, boys and girls, as they are burdened now. Make real to us youths and maidens who, though they love each other to the breaking of their hearts, dare not marry. Make real to us families who, though they long for children, dare not have them. Make real to us boys and girls who must leave their schools. Conjure up in our imaginations households where there is not food enough to eat, where morale breaks down beneath the heavy strain of not being wanted by the world, where the days are hard and the nights are terrible.

Grant to this people, so many of whom have plenty, the grace of generosity to help in this day of need.

We lift up before Thee our care for the peace of the world. O, God, sit with the men who amid the tangled web of international affairs try to pick out the snarl, and grant that all forces which make for peace and justice may be strengthened. So, as we pray, may we live. Cleansed and empowered send us forth from this place to transmute our strength into service, our griefs into sympathy, our own burdens into understanding of the burdens of others, that we may fulfill his law who said, "He that is greatest among you shall be the servant of all."

We pray in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Officers and Committees of the Riverside Church

We publish annually in the CHURCH MONTHLY a list of the officers of the Riverside Church and of the various auxiliary organizations together with the committees of these respective groups. As we scan these various lists we cannot help but regret the fact that in so many cases the people who are active in one department in the church's life have little or no contact, much less intimate acquaintance, with the friends who are engaged in other activities. There are probably many members of the Riverside Church, particularly among those who have come in in the last few years, who are not personally acquainted with a single member of the Board of Trustees and yet these busy men are constantly at work planning for the advancement of the church and for all the practical arrangements which make our work possible. What is true of the Board of Trustees in connection with the whole work of the church is true in some degree of every single group that is enumerated in this roster of officers and committees. We are confident that little by little our people are becoming better acquainted and we look forward to the time when we will have become even more definitely a "church family."

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Dr. Fosdick on the Radio

Dr. Fosdick's afternoon services over the radio will be resumed the first Sunday in November. He will speak, as formerly, at five o'clock over Station WJZ.

The growth of this National Vespers Hour during the past four years will interest our readers. In the season of 1928-29, the service at which Dr. Fosdick preached was relayed over nine stations. In 1929-30, the season opened with ten stations cooperating, and at the close there were twenty-one stations. In 1930-31, twenty-nine stations relayed the services on the opening day and at the close of the season there were forty stations hooked up. Last year, 1931-32, forty broadcasting stations carried the initial service and when the series closed in the spring the service and sermon were going out over fifty stations.

Arts and Crafts in The Riverside Church

By Alma Clark Guillet

(Editor's Note: *We are greateful to Mrs. Guillet for this story of the growth, during the past two years, of interest in the arts and crafts in the Riverside Church. Her own high enthusiasm, skilled craftsmanship and tireless devotion to the work have carried the project much farther than it could possibly have gone without her and much farther than it has been possible for the church to go in providing the leadership, financial support and equipment which the numbers interested might seem to warrant.*)

TWO years ago the craft work of the Riverside Church began in a small way as an interest group of the Church School and has since broadened its scope because of the demand for various crafts by different groups and individuals in the church.

Some thirty boys and girls from the junior-high department of the Church School met one Friday night in October, 1930, and formed the "Bell-tower Marionette Club." They made hand puppets and gave their first show during the Christmas holidays. Some of the heads which were modeled and cast by the children showed real ability, as did the scenes which they planned and carried through before a sympathetic audience of parents. After this venture they began making real marionettes which were finished and costumed by May, 1931, when they gave their first show in the tenth floor assembly room—"Huckleberry Finn"—a show which demonstrated progress but still left much to be desired.

In the meantime the Business and Professional Women's Club asked for some form of handwork on Tuesday nights, and a small group was formed in mid-winter who began by making reed baskets. A group of women members of the church also asked for a class in design and interior decoration on Wednesday mornings. These women took their own homes for study and improvement. In the spring, the Riverside Guild asked that a group from their membership have craft instruction on Thursday nights, so that, by the end of May, we had four groups with a total membership of about seventy-five.

In the fall of 1931 these groups continued, with the exception of the Wednesday morning class which became absorbed by the Tuesday night women's classes, occupying three rooms on the sixth floor, having grown in total membership to over a hundred. A men's group was formed on Tuesday nights which has done excellent work under the leadership of an expert cabinet-maker, while some of the men have enjoyed making etchings, tooling leather, engraving in wood, making block prints and other forms of craft work. The Guild group on Thursday nights grew to a membership approaching a hundred. A number of young artists became attracted to the etching group with the result that some of the etchings made in the class were well worthy of the admiration that they excited in our exhibition. Some of the etched jewelry showed such talent that one student, out of employment as a singer, obtained orders from a downtown jewelry store, while another was able to increase the business of the summer shop in which she earned her living. The making of leather purses and bags from choice skins became so popular in both Thursday and Tuesday classes that over a hundred were made, some of ostrich skin, some of morocco, seal, snake, tooled calf, etc.

The Bell-tower Marionette Club, owing largely to the fact that so many of its junior-high members became senior-high, merged into a senior-high interest group

with corresponding maturity of invention and ability. The crude show which was given the first year was succeeded in the second by an operetta, the Christmas Saga, which was presented during the Christmas holidays of 1931. The senior-high choir sang the operetta, pictures of which appear on this page.

In the first picture the shepherds are kneeling before the heavenly angels, the foremost shepherd being the finished work of a boy who the year before had done poor work. In the second picture the wise men are stopping for rest and consultation in the desert. The camel in the center of this picture stands twenty-nine inches high, and was made by the president of the club, a boy who experimented in many ways before he finally got his camel to work like a real camel, but who had the satisfaction of knowing that he did it himself. The wise man was made by another boy, who likewise experimented until his puppet took on the dignity and interest of a desert philosopher. The third picture shows Mary in the center with the infant Jesus while the shepherds kneel on the left and wise men on the right. The ass which bore Mary is on one side and the camel on the other is resting after the journey. The fourth picture shows the journey home to Nazareth. Joseph, who is represented as a young man, leads the donkey with its precious freight.

It is interesting to remember that the word "marionette" is a variant of "mariolette" or "little Mary," and that the first marionette shows were centered about Christ and His

mother. In an age when few could read or write, these little actors told the Christmas tale to the humble people. Later other Bible stories were added and it was not until later generations that marionette shows became secular in character.

In May the Bell-tower Club gave another marionette show in which they dramatized a Russian folk-tale and two fairy tales. In a portion of the picture below, one scene from this folk-tale, "The Golden Fish," is shown. The little old man, at the command of his grasping wife, rows out on a stormy sea, while the little golden fish, who is really a fairy dwelling in the ocean, tells him from the crest of a wave that his wife has "asked too much." The waves and boat were ingeniously contrived by the boys to move as in a real storm. The little old man worked his oars in a lifelike manner as his boat rocked on the painted billows, which rose and fell like real waves.

Without going back entirely to the primitive simplicity of the earliest puppet shows, there is a wide range of inspirational work among children, heretofore little attempted by professionals, which it should be the privilege of the church increasingly to use.

The total membership in the various craft groups at the close of the year, the end of May, was 236, of which 96 were children and 140 adults.

All groups united in an exhibit on the sixteenth floor the last of May, pictures of which accompany this article. The one on page 501 shows details of etched and cut-out silver and ivorine jewelry, leatherwork, books bound and carved linoleum blocks. The picture above shows marionettes and stage scenery, while tables in the foreground exhibit craft articles of many kinds. On the wall are hung batiks from the batik class. At the left are hung sketches from the dynamic symmetry class.

ETCHINGS, HANDWORK AND MARIONETTES FROM THE "CRAFTS" GROUP.

Much of the work done in the classes was not included in this exhibit, the aim being simply to show the kind of work

Some Articles of Handiwork from Our "Crafts" Room.

done in each of the craft activities. Small exhibits have been held in the craft room from time to time, notably the large variety of block-print Christmas cards which ranged from the small boy's "scotti" to the finished production of the young artist. On the display wall of the room we also have had a few loan exhibits, notably that of Howard Giles, dean of Fine Arts in our Neighboring Roerich Museum, as well as that of the New York School of Fine Arts.

In all our work, while we approach professional standards, owing to the talent which we find in our classes, no attempt is made to train professionals. Our aim is to release latent powers and to furnish the individual with opportunities for creative work. It does not matter how crude this work may be, provided the person is showing improvement and enjoys his project. Dr. Fosdick says, "Of course as a boy I worked with tools," yet many come into our craft room who frankly state, "I have never done anything with my hands." Some, when the first object, designed and made by them, is completed, testify to experiencing a real thrill of achievement. Many come into our classes who are out of employment, and their absorption in various creative projects, together with the atmosphere of love and good comradeship that pervades the craft shop, has proved a "lifesaver." A senior boy came with six choice old books which he wanted to rebind for his mother. The work was long and painstaking but he stuck to it and each book was better bound than the last. Last year, all that this boy did was inaccurate. Now he has learned accuracy because the project was his own and so increased his interest and effort. Another boy came with a whole evening's entertainment all carefully and laboriously written and unique posters with which to advertise it. Only a portion could be used but the boy was satisfied.

Our aim is not a vocation but an avocation, not specialization but a broadening out into many kinds of handwork, not carrying the student far in any one craft, but simply introducing him to it. If he finds that he has a special liking and desire to continue, he can follow his chosen craft or

art interest further in some art school or other institution. Our book binding is simple and elementary, confining itself principally to the re-binding of old books or the making of a diary or guest book; our jewelry emphasizes design rather than stone-setting and difficult soldering; our pottery is just the beginnings of the craft; our interior decoration concerns simple problems in our own homes. In fact, our homes are the centers of interest for most of our craft efforts.

We like to style the craft work of The Riverside Church as the "home crafts." The etching may be hung upon the wall, the hooked rug may be placed beside the bed, the bedside table may be made with church tools, or the doll's house may be made by the child—in short, a much-loved home may be evolved with the help of the church.

It is never too late to mend. Growth till the end of life should be the motto of adult as well as child, and handwork that has been omitted in early training can be in some degree made up to the individual in our church workshop.

The Sermon

(*Continued from page* 492)

makes this man a bandit; it makes that man a Christ.

You see, here again Christianity lays its hands on one of the deepest desires of human nature. Those first disciples, and the early Christians after them, were out for a new experience, building a better world, a minority working for the Kingdom of God, patriots not for the status quo today but for a possible society tomorrow—behind them the security of a great faith, over them the consciousness of a divine friendship, ahead of them the allurement of a great adventure.

That kind of Christianity will peter out only when these innate and ineradicable desires in human nature peter out, for Christian living at its best is simply these deepest things in mankind at their best, and when one pleads for it he is pleading for the profoundest satisfactions of the deepest wants of men.

How, then, should we live in a generation when there is no hope for the world unless enough people can be found who will lift up their capacity for pioneering so that for the world's peace, for economic decency, for public service they will say to God, "All my desire is before thee"?

Once more note that the psychologists, strangely enough, tell us that another basic desire in human nature is for a sense of usefulness. At first sight that may seem unduly complimentary to human nature. Plenty of people apparently get along well without desiring to be useful. Yet this truth on which the psychologists insist becomes plain and plausible when we study it. Indeed, it springs out of the very nature of evolution. Why did any of the organs of the body develop and persist? Of course, because they are useful. To be sure, there are some of them not useful now but they are the leftovers of organs that once were useful. After all, by and large, unless an organ functions to some purpose nature would not have produced or perpetuated it.

That is the basis for the saying of Thomas Huxley: "The sense of uselessness is the severest shock that any organism can sustain." What psychologist or physician or minister could not illustrate that? Men and women can stand trouble, often dreadful trouble, and do it nobly too. They rise above the loss of fortune, the loss of family. They are triumphant in the face of death. But one thing is more terrific than all these—the sense of uselessness, the consciousness of meaning nothing to anyone and doing nothing for anyone. Was it not Christ who said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it"; "Whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all"? Hard gospel, men have said. Upon the contrary, it is a glorious gospel. It is the statement of a basic law as deeply in-

wrought in human nature as gravitation is in physical nature. It represents the satisfaction of one of mankind's profoundest needs. For Huxley is right: "the sense of uselessness is the severest shock that any organism can sustain."

My friends, you have often heard sermons about what we ought to desire. I have asked you to think about what we do desire, not because we are pious but because we are human. How wrong these deep desires can go! How we can mess up life with them! Yet to what altitudes they can ascend! If any man would know what vital Christianity is let him listen not so much to the formal creeds as to the greatest of the hymns:

"A mighty fortress is our God,"

"O thou great Friend to all the sons of men,"

"Forward through the ages,
In unbroken line,
Move the faithful spirits
At the call divine,"

"O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free."

Lord, all my desire is before thee.

PRAYER

Eternal God, our Father, now that we have thought together, send us out to live upon the basis of our deepest and best selves. Forgive us for our superficiality. Give us the grace and courage now to launch out into the deep. Amen.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on May 8, 1932.

In Lighter Vein

There are about sixty people regularly employed in The Riverside Church. These employees have casual contacts with approximately 8,000 people each week who come here for one purpose or another. Many of them are sightseers and curious to learn all about us in a short time. The following questions are among those which we have been called upon to answer.

"Why isn't the radio antique like the rest of the furniture?"

"What did the church cost?" This is the prize question, and suggests the first interest of many visitors.

"What is Dr. Fosdick's salary?" runs a close second.

"May I leave my cat in the office while I attend the organ recital?"

"May I have as a souvenir a piece of the rock broken off by the lightning?"

"Where is that place where there is no air where you can hear Dr. Fosdick preach but can't see him?"

"What chapel did the French Government give to the church?"

"Where do the Men's Class leave their coats and hats?"

"If I sent in my check for $15 or $20, could I get one of those green admission tickets for church services?"

"Have you anything to give away? Any souvenirs of any kind?"

"Is it the 'C' bell that strikes the hours?"

"What make of pianos is used in the church?"

"How do they get the red in the stained glass windows? Is the paint mixed with gold or copper?"

"Do I have to have a pass to go up into the tower? I'm a Baptist."

"Is there a difference between chimes and a carillon? Are they played in the same manner?"

"Do you know of anyone who would like to buy an extra large cot-bed for $2.50?"

"Have you found a hat quite like your own, only it doesn't have crosses on it?"

"Where is the church parlor with the green chairs?"

"Can I leave my dog with you while I go for my child?"

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This index covers "The Church Monthly" numbers from November, 1931, through October, 1932. "The Church Monthly" office will have your file of Volume VI bound if you so desire. The price will be $2.00. For further information address "The Church Monthly."

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Please notify the church office of any change in your mailing address.

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Important

Every member of the Riverside Church congregation who would be intelligent upon questions of church policy today and their influence upon the future will want to set aside four Wednesday nights to hear from four members of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry. Each man will speak from his own point of view, will bring his personal testimony of what he found in the Far East, and will give his interpretation of what the effect is likely to be upon the work of the church at home and abroad.

Here is the list of dates and speakers: November 16, Albert L. Scott, Chairman of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, a member of this church and of our Board of Trustees. November 23, William P. Merrill, pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, who was loaned for the better part of the year to the Commission that carried on the investigation. December 7, President Clarence A. Barbour of Brown University. He likewise was on leave from his duties that he might make the trip to the Far East. December 14, Rufus M. Jones, another outstanding leader of religious life in America, who was loaned to the cause for this particular survey of the Eastern mission fields.

These addresses will be informing to an unprecedented degree. We doubt if any church in America ever had a series of speakers equipped to bring such a timely interpretation of conditions as are these men. We very much doubt if the Riverside Church will ever have such another opportunity. We are particularly concerned that these men shall speak not simply to the interested minority who are bound to come out when such subjects are discussed but to the rank and file of our church and congregation. These are important discussions and your attendance is of importance to The Riverside Church.